

Parientes

By José Antonio Esquibel

Founders of the Villa de Santa Fe #2 The Martín Serrano Family

In the small Villa de Santa Fe, on a cold winter day in January 1626, Capt. Hernán Martín Serrano appeared before a scribe to provide testimony as part of the Inquisition's investigation into the behavior of Gov. Juan de Eulate. Before giving his succinct account, Hernán declared he was more than 70 years of age, and the scribe described him as an "*antiguo poblador y vecino de Santa Fe*" (old settler and tax-paying citizen of Santa Fe), distinguishing him from more recent residents of the town. After having his testimony recorded and read to him, Hernán took the quill pen in hand and signed his name clearly and legibly, "hernan mrn."

As a resident of the kingdom of New Mexico since 1598, Hernán remained loyal to the cause of preserving the realm in service to God and king. Through his two known sons, Hernán and Luis, he became the progenitor of the large Martínez clan of northern New Mexico, with numerous descendants living today.

Born about 1548 in the mining town of Zacatecas, Mexico, Hernán was among the earliest Spaniards born in that silver-mining boomtown where rich ore deposits were discovered by Cristóbal de Oñate and his peers in 1540. This amazing discovery

brought a rush of men to the frontier, men set on making their fortune, including Hernán's father, also named Hernán Martín Serrano. However, fortune did not smile on all men in that harsh and dangerous frontier.

As an adult, Hernán must have followed the general affairs of the wealthiest family of the region, the Oñate-Zaldívar clan. When Juan de Oñate successfully acquired a royal contract in September 1695 to establish a Spanish settlement in the far northern land known as La Nueva México, Hernán's decision to join the endeavor came quickly. By February 1596 he was already part of Oñate's group of soldier-adventurers, holding the rank of sergeant by the following year. With him came his wife, Juana Rodríguez, and their family, indicating that this couple had at least one if not more children.

As one of about 131 soldiers who followed Oñate into New Mexico, Hernán eventually settled at the Pueblo of Okay Owingeh, christened San Juan de los Caballeros by the Spaniards, and then at the nearby settlement of San Gabriel in 1599. During the difficult and challenging years ahead, Hernán and his family persevered. However, in the late summer of 1601 he seriously considered abandoning New Mexico with other soldier-settlers who viewed New Mexico as a lost cause, with scant hope for any quick riches and little promise of making a suitable living. However, he changed his mind and remained loyal to keeping New Mexico as a Spanish outpost.

As a *cuadrillero* (squadron leader) in October 1601, Hernán described how some of the soldiers had become farmers and that each year the harvest increased, in particular wheat and Castilian vegetables, thus allowing them to rely less on the Pueblo

Indians. He affirmed the positive relations between the Spaniards and many of the Pueblo Indians, having been told by some of them that before the Spaniards arrived "they had many wars among themselves."

Except for two "wars," one at Ácoma and the other in the region of the Jumanas, the presence of the Spaniards brought peace among many of the diverse Pueblo tribes, with various bands of Apaches as common enemies. Hernán himself was godfather to three Tewa Indian boys, attesting to the development of friendly relations. Without the political alliance with Pueblo Indian leaders, the Spaniards could not have remained in New Mexico—despite their advanced military technology, they were far outnumbered by Pueblo Indians.

Between 1601 and 1609, the lack of significant discoveries of precious metals caused more soldiers to leave in discouragement, reducing the number of soldier-settlers to 30 by the time Pedro de Peralta was appointed governor in early 1609. Hernán was among the few unfaltering settlers.

Pueblo Indian leaders encouraged the remaining Spaniards to stay. In particular, the names of three leaders, referred to as "*amigos de los españoles*," "friends of the Spaniards," were documented in 1613: Cañasola, captain of the Pueblo of Pecos; Anda, captain of the Pueblo of San Cristóbal, and Don Lorenzo, captain of the Pueblo of Pojoaque. These leaders helped to negotiate alliances with the more distant communities, such as Taos Pueblo.

About 1606–1607, Hernán fathered a son by a Tano Indian woman named Doña Inés. Due to lack of records, it is not certain if Hernán remarried after the death of his first wife or if his relations with Doña Inés were

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Family of Dimas Eustacio Martínez, born 1880, and a descendant of Hernán Martín Serrano, the elder, with his arm around his wife, María Pacífica Romero, at their home in Mancos, Colo. Their children, from left to right: Eduardo, William, Rey, Félix, and Ezekiel standing behind. The woman in the hat has not been identified. Photo courtesy of Thomas D. Martínez.

outside of marriage. In either case, Doña Inés apparently resided at the camp of Santa Fe when she gave birth to Hernán Martín Serrano, *el mozo* (the younger), who gave his birthplace as Santa Fe in later years.

It appears that Doña Inés was the same Tano Indian woman who was taken as a young girl from the Tano Pueblo of San Cristóbal in 1591 when the Spaniards of the Castaño de Sosa expedition left New Mexico. Raised among Spaniards, she became acculturated and accustomed to the ways of Spanish society. Returning to New Mexico as a member of Oñate's expedition, Doña Inés was expected to serve in a role similar to that of La Malinche, the Indian interpreter

who aided Hernán Cortés 80 years earlier. Doña Inés became so well-assimilated that she lived among the Spaniards in the camp of Santa Fe, becoming the mother of one of the first individuals born of mixed Spanish and Pueblo Indian parentage.

Hernán, the younger, was distinctively *nuevomexicano*. From his paternal heritage he acquired Spanish customs and language as well as the Roman Catholic faith and the tradition of honor in service to the Crown. From his maternal heritage he acquired a knack for Indian languages and familiarity with a region that his maternal ancestors had occupied for centuries. He may very well have had relatives among the Tano Indians

of the Pueblo of San Cristóbal with whom he interacted. Not surprisingly, Hernán remained a resident of his birthplace for many decades, until August 1680.

With the official designation of Santa Fe as a *villa* in early 1610, the main task was allotment of land for houses and farming, and the construction of new dwellings around the Plaza, such as the church and the Franciscan *convento*. The original Plaza apparently stretched from its present location, in front of what is known today as the Palace of the Governors, all the way to the area now occupied by the Basilica of St. Francis and Cathedral Park. It is believed that the church and *convento* were originally

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located on the site of the Basilica and park. In these early years Santa Fe was referred to as *La Villa de Santa Fe y Real Campo de los Españoles* (the Villa of Santa Fe and Royal Camp of the Spaniards). The patron saint of the Franciscan *convento* was Nuestra Señora de la Inmaculada Concepción (Our Lady of Immaculate Conception), and in this form of veneration Santa María most likely also doubled as the patron saint of the church. It was not until the late 1690s or early 1700s that San Francisco was named as patron saint of the church and convent of the Villa de Santa Fe.

The number of soldier-settlers in New Mexico remained small, hovering at about 30 to 50 men, many with families, between 1610 and 1640. Hernán Martín Serrano, the elder, continued to reside in the Villa de Santa Fe and to serve as a loyal soldier of the king, attaining the rank of captain and reaching the advanced age of about 70 years. The last recorded account of Hernán comes from the year 1626. He apparently had died by September 1628, when records indicate that Doña Inés was married to Francisco "Pancho" Balón, an *indio mexicano* and a blacksmith of the Villa de Santa Fe. Doña Inés still resided in Santa Fe in the 1630s and was respectfully regarded.

The two known children of Hernán, the elder, were the younger Hernán, born circa 1606–1607, and Luis Martín Serrano, whose year of birth is not known. It is unclear which woman was the mother of Luis. Was it Juana Rodríguez or Doña Inés, or possibly another woman? It is known that both sons were *mestizos*, part European and part Indian. Both continued in the same career as their father, serving the king as soldiers in defending Pueblo and Spanish settlements from constant attacks by raiding bands of nomadic Indians while striving to make a living for their families.

Like all soldiers of New Mexico, the Martín Serrano brothers received no regular salary from the Crown. Instead they strove to prove their merit and quality as men worthy of special privileges granted by the governor in the name of the King of Spain. Hernán attained the rank of captain and was granted a Pueblo Indian *encomienda*, with the right to accept tribute from the assigned pueblo in return for his military service.

In 1650 Capt. Martín Serrano and Capt. Diego del Castillo led a small troop of soldiers with a large number of Pueblo Indian warriors on an exploratory expedition to the region of modern-day Texas, following the Concho River of south-central Texas, where the Jumano Indians lived. He also served as an interpreter of Indian languages, and one of these languages was that of the Jumanos.



Patricio Emilio Martínez, b. 1870, a descendant of Hernán Martín Serrano, the elder, with his wife, Elviria María Martínez, b. 1888, both born in Río Arriba, N.M.; and their daughter, Edna María Martínez, b. 1909 in Abiquiú, N.M. Photo courtesy Lucille A. Martínez.

As one of the earliest businessmen of the Villa de Santa Fe, Hernán owned and operated an *obraje*, a textile manufacturing shop. In all likelihood, wool was the primary material woven into textile products such as stockings, pants and shirts. These items were either sold to local residents or sent on wagons for trade in towns of New Spain. Some of the wool probably came from sheep raised by his brother, Luis, at the family *estancia* located in the area of Chimayó known as La Cañada. Indications are that Indians worked for Hernán and were paid for their services, as required by law.

Hernán resided in Santa Fe until the Pueblo Indians uprising of August 1680 forced him, his wife, children and grandchildren to flee the homeland of his maternal ancestors for safety at El Paso. His last known recorded testimony occurred in October 1685.

During his lifetime Hernán married at least three women. By his first wife, Isabel de Monuera, he had a daughter, María, and apparently two sons, Juan and José. María Martín Monuera married Bartolomé de Ledesma. A widower by 1664, Hernán then married María de Madrid. It is not certain if they had any children. At an advanced age, Hernán married Josefa de la Asunción González, with whom he had as many as eight children: Matéo, Andrés, Tomasa, María, Ana, Margarita, Manuela and Gertrudis. Several of these children returned to New Mexico after it was restored through negotiations between Diego de Vargas and

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Pueblo Indian leaders in 1692.

Capt. Luís Martín Serrano, a literate man, served as "*alcalde mayor y capitán de Guerra de la jurisdicción de los Teguas*" (chief magistrate and war captain of the Tewa jurisdiction), basically encompassing the area from Pojoaque Pueblo to Picurís Pueblo to the Pueblo of Okay Owingeh. In addition to raising livestock on the lands of his *estancia*, he apparently grew crops of corn and wheat, some of which he sold to others.

Luis died in November 1661, leaving his widow, Catalina de Salazar, and at least three sons, Domingo, Pedro and Luis. It was through these sons and as many as 35 grandchildren that the Martín Serrano clan became one of the largest families northern New Mexico.

In the 1700s the descendants of the Martín Serrano family shortened their surname to Martín, and in the 1800s the members of this family eventually assumed the variation of Martínez. 🌿

The next family to be featured in this column is that of Madrid.



José Antonio Esquibel has roots in northern New Mexico and northeastern Mexico. He's the co-author of two books on genealogy.